

Thompson Divide Drilling History

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There has been some oil and gas drilling in Thompson Divide every decade since the first well was drilled there in 1947. (A well less than 10 miles west of Thompson Divide in Mesa County dates to the 1930s, and is still producing.)

BLM and Forest Service records show that starting with that first well in 1947, 34 oil and gas wells have been drilled in Thompson Divide:

- 31 were known to have found natural gas, but not all went into production (likely due to access, pipeline or quantity issues).
- Two others were drilled into known gas-bearing formations but not tested for natural gas.
- Only one well did not show natural gas. It was drilled on the northeast side of the Thompson Divide boundary near Highway 82.
- Close to half have been in production (14, plus 2 more are “shut-in” but considered capable of producing gas).
- The first producing well was drilled in 1960 in what’s now the Wolf Creek Storage Area in Pitkin County.
- Hydraulic fracturing would have been used on the wells that were put in production.
- The only currently producing well within Thompson Divide is an SG Interest well in Delta County drilled in 2006.
- Most of the wells are federal wells.

The first oil and gas well was drilled in Thompson Divide in 1947 in Coal Basin in Pitkin County by Superior Oil Company.

Beginning with that 1947 well, 16 oil and gas wells were drilled in the Pitkin County part of Thompson Divide. 11 were put into production, including the seven wells now used in the Wolf Creek Storage Area. (Three additional wells were also drilled in the 1980s and 90s for gas storage in Wolf Creek, include those and you have 19 wells drilled in the Pitkin part of TD.) None are producing now, though.

Four wells have been drilled in Garfield County part of Thompson Divide, the first in 1960 (west of the confluence of Cattle Creek and the Roaring Fork River) and three in the 1980s (one in Fourmile Park, one north of Babbish Gulch near Sunlight, and one near the Marion Mine by County road 123). They were not put

into production. The well near Cattle Creek is the one that did not show natural gas.

Wells have also been drilled in Delta (2), Mesa (4), and Gunnison (5) counties. A side note: BLM assumed management of federal minerals in 1983 and would not have been involved with these wells until then. The USGS managed the federal mineral estate prior to 1983.

Wolf Creek Storage Area

Source Gas, LLC operates a 9,524-acre natural gas storage area on the White River National Forest southwest of Carbondale, Colorado, called the Wolf Creek Storage Area.

The gas storage field is critical to reliably supplying natural gas to communities from Glenwood Springs to Aspen.

The area first began as a natural gas production area, with the first well drilled in the 1960s. As that well and others drilled in the late 1960s were becoming depleted, the area's potential for storage was identified.

The area was first used as a storage field in 1972, with it being formally converted and designated a storage area in 1977.

The storage area currently includes 10 well pads consisting of:

- 7 active natural gas injection/extraction wells
- 3 monitoring wells

The working storage capacity is 3 billion cubic feet gas (BCF), with a reserve capacity of 7.4 BCF.

Natural gas is injected into the wells during off-peak demand periods, typically May through October, and extracted during peak demand periods, typically November through April.

Injection and extraction averages between 1 to 1.5 BCF per year.

The natural gas is stored in the Mesaverde Group sandstones.

The storage area is regulated by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The U.S. Forest Service monitors and approves all surface uses within the storage area.

Only natural gas that has been processed, odorized and meets appropriate gas specification for retail delivery is stored here.